DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 183 514 SP 015 561

AUTHOR Hoffman, Cynthia K.
TITLE Linker's Guide to the Solution Analysis Series.
INSTITUTION Florida State Dept. of Education, Tallahassee.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE May 79
CONTRACT 400-76-0089
NOTE 15p.; For related documents see SP 015 558-560
AVAILABLE FROM Office of Dissemination/Diffusion, Florida Dept. of Education, Knott Building, Tallahassee, FL ($1.25)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Decision Making; Educational Needs; Needs Assessment; *Organizational Effectiveness; *Planning; *Problem Solving; Program Development; Program Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS Linking Agents; *Research and Development Utilization Program

ABSTRACT

This linker's guide introduces the systematic problem-solving approach used by the Florida Linkage System. An overview of the System's three SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES Guidebooks is given in order to clearly identify the different steps in the system's proposed training process. (LH)

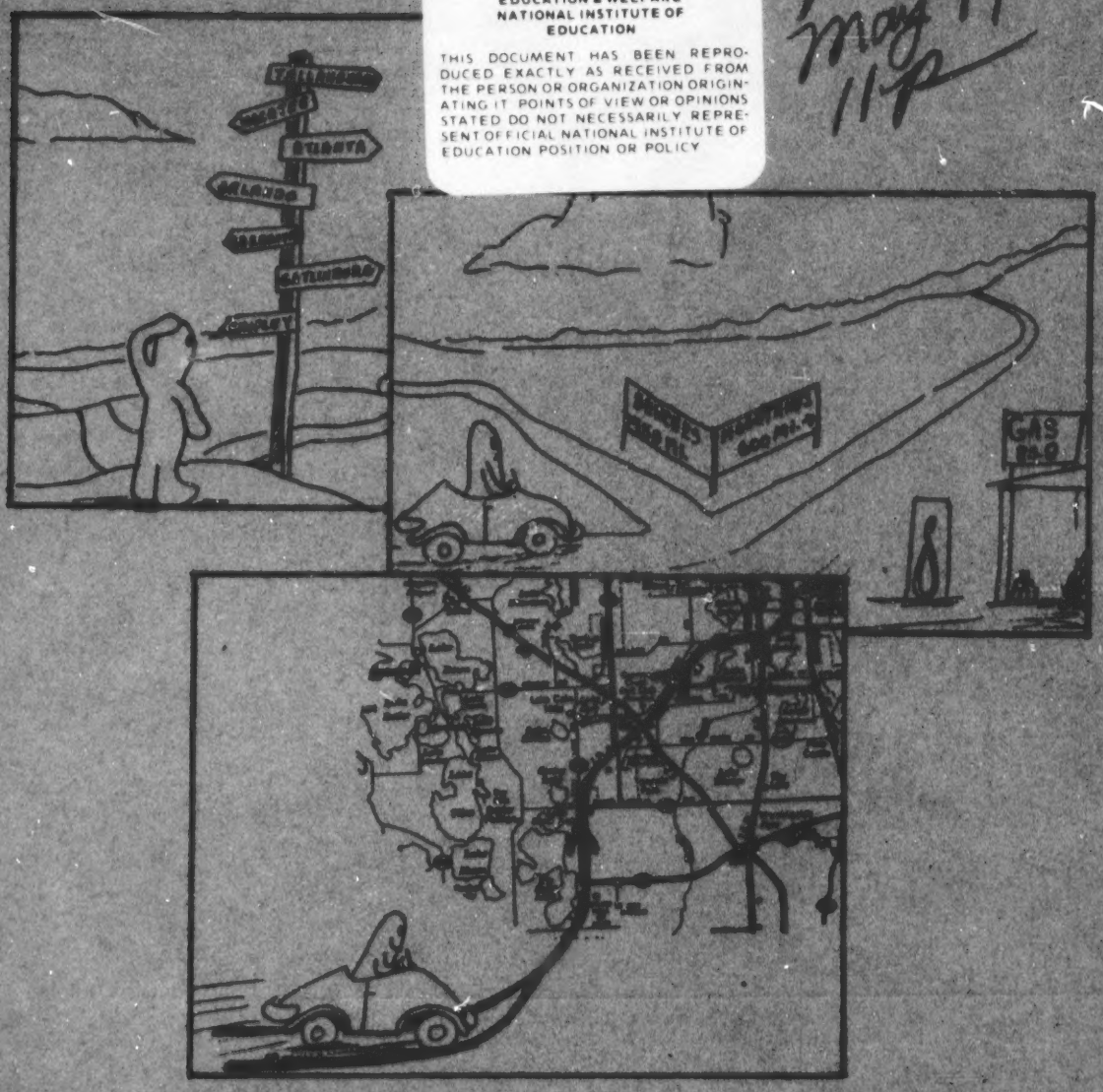
****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED183514

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Jac SD
May 19
11p



LINKER'S GUIDE

SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES

2

LINKER'S GUIDE TO THE

SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES

Developed by:

Options From Research and Development
Florida State University

Cynthia K. Hoffman

FLORIDA LINKAGE SYSTEM PROJECT
Office of Educational Dissemination/Diffusion
Florida Department of Education
Tallahassee, Florida

Sponsored by:

National Institute of Education, HEW

May 1979

The work presented or reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract from the National Institute of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Institute of Education and no official endorsement by the National Institute of Education should be inferred.

(NIE 400-76-0089)

State of Florida
Department of Education
Tallahassee, Florida
Ralph D. Turlington, Commissioner
An equal opportunity employer

INTRODUCTION

The Florida Linkage System uses a systematic problem-solving approach as its foundation. This problem-solving approach can be described as a number of inter-related steps.

After someone in the school perceives a need for change, the faculty...

1. analyzes the problem situation
2. determines solution requirements
3. searches for potential solutions
4. selects the "best" solution(s)
5. plans for implementation and evaluation.
6. follows through and gives feedback to the school community.

THE SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES is designed to help a faculty decision-making group at the local level accomplish steps 4 and 5 (above) in a thorough and systematic manner. Both these steps require some tedious analysis in order for effective decision making to take place. The success of the final outcome rests heavily on the quality of the preparations and decisions achieved during these steps.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES

The SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES consists of three guidebooks which are designed to be completed in order, as follows:

- Guidebook 1 - "Narrowing the Alternatives"
- Guidebook 2 - "Rating the Costs & Benefits"
- Guidebook 3 - "Developing A Work Action Plan"

GUIDEBOOK 1

In Guidebook 1, the group members begin with a list of the products which are under consideration for adoption, and publishers' descriptions of each product. The group is asked first to eliminate inappropriate options by answering a set of general questions about how well each option meets basic criteria for adoption in their school situation. Individual group members are then asked to complete a detailed PRODUCT DESCRIPTION CHECKLIST for each remaining option. On the basis of these checklists, individual group members are also asked to prepare brief presentations about each product option to share with the rest of the group. After the group has heard the descriptive presentation about each product, they answer (by consensus) a set of questions

designed to identify those products which best meet six major criteria.

GUIDEBOOK 2

When the group begins Guidebook 2, the GROUP CO-ORDINATOR should be sure to have copies of the PRODUCT DESCRIPTION CHECKLISTS for each of the options still under consideration. Guidebook 2 provides very specific guidelines for determining costs of each option and for conducting cost and benefit ratings of the change that would be required to switch from their current program to each option still under consideration.

Start-up and maintenance costs are determined for five major categories:

- Materials
- Teacher Training
- Equipment
- Personnel
- Consultants

Benefits are determined more subjectively, by each rater, on the basis of thorough program descriptions found on the PRODUCT DESCRIPTION CHECKLIST completed in

Guidebook 1. The group is instructed by the Guidebook to have each member complete the COST & BENEFIT RATING TOOL individually for each product under consideration.

An Individual Summary Sheet is provided for each member to complete after the COST & BENEFIT RATING TOOL for a product is finished. Then the group meets as a whole, and each member reports his or her individual conclusion.

A Group Summary Sheet is provided in the guidebook to help the group summarize their joint conclusions about the product they have rated. The guidebook reminds the group at this point that the COST & BENEFIT RATING TOOL cannot make their decisions for them. It is designed to be a tool which facilitates thorough, systematic analysis of one's feelings about the cost and benefits of changing from the existing program to the new product under consideration. In this way, it can be an excellent indicator of more and less desirable options. But the final decision about which, if any, product to adopt still rests on the people in the group --not the tool.

GUIDEBOOK 3

The last guidebook in the series, Guidebook 3, shows the group how to develop a WORK ACTION PLAN for implementing and evaluating the product they have chosen to adopt. Before beginning this guidebook, the GROUP COORDINATOR should be sure to have all the information that has been gathered about the product the group has chosen to adopt. That includes the PRODUCT DESCRIPTION CHECKLIST for that product and all publishers' descriptions of program materials and procedures.

The first step in developing a WORK ACTION PLAN is to answer a set of questions about each of the following components which are critical to implementation.

- Program materials
- Supplementary materials
- Training
- Facilities
- Support services
- Evaluation
- Reporting results

After careful consideration of all factors involved the answers to these questions will serve as the basis

for deciding what tasks must be accomplished to implement the new program. The guidebook provides directions, with an example, to aid the group in developing a timeline of tasks and personnel for the implementation process. And, finally, the guidebook leads the group to develop its "Calendar of Events" for implementation.

HOW YOU CAN USE THE SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES

The SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES is a set of three guidebooks designed to be used by a group of faculty members who have agreed to serve as a decision-making group which represents the school in choosing a product to adopt and planning for its implementation. The series has been designed to be used after a school has identified its problem, its solution requirements, and a set of potential programs that could be adopted as a solution.

The guidebooks themselves are self-explanatory, but the process of working through the series requires coordination. For best results, you, the LINKER, should work closely with a decision-making group member who has agreed to act as GROUP COORDINATOR. To-

gether you should plan and coordinate time, place, and content of group meetings according to the tasks suggested in the guidebooks and the particular constraints of the individual school situation. It is not necessary that you -- the LINKER -- be present at every group meeting. But, in order for this process to work, it is necessary that you help the group choose a GROUP COORDINATOR who is committed to the effort and will be present at every group meeting. Your role as LINKER, then, will be to:

- do detailed initial planning with the GROUP COORDINATOR based on your thorough knowledge of the SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES.
- attend the first few meetings to help them "get off to the right start".
- check with GROUP COORDINATOR frequently on the group's progress.
- act as intermediary for the group with the principal and district level personnel to help them obtain any needed support services for their activities.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE GROUP COORDINATOR'S ROLE

Each of the guidelines is organized in such a way that it can be broken into small steps, or tasks, that can be accomplished at different times. You, the LINKER, should carefully plan with the GROUP COORDINATOR how each guidebook will be broken down into tasks and whether each task will be accomplished at group meetings or by individual members who are assigned tasks outside of meeting times. The outcomes of each task can be combined to form a completed stage in the process.

For example, Guidebook 1 directs the group through four steps. In Step 1 the group answers a list of questions about each product under consideration, and then they eliminate those that do not receive adequate affirmative answers. Step 1 would take about an hour for a group to complete. The GROUP COORDINATOR would record the group's conclusions at that meeting. Those products still under consideration after completing Step 1 would be the subjects for Step 2.

Step 2 requires the group to fill out a PRODUCT DESCRIPTION CHECKLIST for each product still under

consideration. This type of task would probably be better accomplished as individual assignments than as a group effort. The GROUP COORDINATOR would be responsible for planning how the step was to be accomplished, who would do each product, and when the task should be completed.

The GROUP COORDINATOR should not assume that each guidebook has the tasks broken down in the same way. The procedure for each task is different because each conforms to the required steps in the solution analysis process. Some tasks take much longer than others to complete. Some should be done individually, while others should be done as a group. Some require special preparation, such as making enough copies of charts or questionnaires for all group members, or gathering together publishers' statements or previously completed charts from the proceeding step. The guidebooks identify what is needed before beginning each step, and whether the step is to be done individually or as a group. However, it is essential that the GROUP COORDINATOR take responsibility for planning the meetings and the tasks to accomplish these steps as specified.

These guidebooks may be duplicated in part, or in total, to facilitate efficient completion of the tasks specified. A GROUP COORDINATOR who makes full use of this flexibility will probably be quite effective. For example, a leader could make two copies of each planning questionnaire in Guidebook 3 and assign two-member subcommittees to do the research and complete each planning questionnaire. Then when all of the "leg work" is completed, the whole group could meet to combine their findings, perform task analysis, and develop the "Calendar of Events" for implementation.

"Detailed planning is essential..."

This is the underlying theme of the SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES. And it also is the underlying theme of this Linker's Guide. The SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES, if followed carefully, can assist a local school faculty in conducting a truly expert "Analysis & Planning" project. But your help is needed to assure that the faculty group and its GROUP COORDINATOR attend to the detailed planning necessary to pilot the course so members of the crew -- and the ship itself -- do not get lost on the way through the SOLUTION ANALYSIS SERIES.

A group project of this nature requires careful coordination and constant monitoring to assure continuous progress from one step to another and, finally, to the end goal:

> ... the satisfaction of having chosen and successfully implemented an effective program which provides significant improvement to the school curriculum...